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Memorandum of the Russian Congress in America

CONVOKED BY

"The League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia."

DEDICATED TO

THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
THE PEOPLE AND PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF RUSSIA,
THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,
THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF FRANCE,
THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ITALY.



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The Government and People of France,
The Government and People of Italy.

"We are fighting for the liberty, the self-government and the undictated development of all peoples."

"No people must be forced under sovereignty under which it does not wish to live. "

(From President Wilson's Note to Russia.)

The present great world war should bring freedom and give full liberty to all oppressed and subjugated races and people.

The great Russian people in Russia have already thrown off the burden of the old odious regime and today enjoying liberty.

But not all of the Russian people are free.

There is still four million Russian people who languish under the burden of exotic slavery in the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

These four million Russians are usually called "Little Russian." They from time immemorial live in their own dear countries, namely: Galicia, Bukowina and Northern Hungary, along the slopes of the Carpathian mountains, through what they are generally called "Car-

pathian Russians." These old Russian countries are still under the servitude of the Austro-Magyar dominion, for what they are commonly known as the "Enslaved Russia".

Specially for Galicia, inhabited by Russian people, applies the name of "Galician Russia", or her historical name "Red Russia", for Bukowina—the name is "Bukowinian Russia" or "Green Russia", while for the Northern Hungary—"Uhorskaia Russia" (Hungarian Russia).

Since the 9th Century, the time of her appearance in history, to the middle of 14th Century, consequently during six centuries, Carpatho-Russia formed a unit with the remaining Russia, not only in national respect, as at present, but she was then in a political union with the Russian Empire and she lived with her one political life.

The Inhabitants of Carpatho-Russia participated in the advance of Prince Oleg on Constantinople (9—10 Centuries); Vladimir the Great baptized the Carpatho-Russians in the Christian faith, while the Russo-Galician Kings: Yaroslav Osmomesl, Roman, Daniel and Daniel's son Lev,—the founder of the City of Lvoff (Lemberg)—occupy a well deserved place in Russian history.

A poet, in a poem of the 12th century, entitled "Words about the regiment of Igor", in the following words depicts the importance and strenght at that time of the Galician principality and its Prince Yaroslav Osmomesl:

"Galician Yaroslav! you sit high on your golden throne, you are supporting the Carpathians with your iron regiments, you are closing the gates of Danube and you are throwing arrows over the Danube".

This period of history, during which Carpatho-Russia constituted one political unit with the remaining Russia, preserving with her its self government and its own rulers, appears to

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be the only illuminated time in the existence of Carpatho-Russia. At that time Carpatho-Russia acquired the most of her political, economical and cultured bloom, happiness and power.

But in 1340 the Galician Russia was attacked by the Polish King Kazimir. Having not received the necessary aid from the remaining Russia, she was not able to repel the strong re-iterative enemy, consequently she awoke under the Polish yoke.

At the present time—it will soon be 600 years—the Galician Russia exists continually under the exotic yokes.

The Polish reign, continuing for four and one half centuries, was an excessive burden for the Galician Russia. The nobility, captivated by enticements, and constrained violently, betrayed their people, becoming Polish themselves; the peasants were fastened, chained to the ground, and existed in slavery of the Polish lords and nobles. They did not consider a Russian peasant as a human being, but as a beast.

Cruel persecutions and executions for their ideas, for their nationality and religion, made the foreign yoke more unbearable.

The Russian Carpathian people always objected to this, so that they may break the chains and obtain liberty.

The Carpathian Russians participated in the Cossack revolts, particularly in the national revolts and battles in which Bohdan Hmelniski was the leader for the liberation of their kindred.

When the greater part of Little Russia was in the end liberated and was annexed to Russia, Carpathian Russia remained under the slavery of foreign people. She was left with the Polish kingdom.

During the first division of the Polish Kingdom, Austria in the year 1772, seized Galicia, four years later she seized Bukowina. At this time Russia did not interfere and so, in this

manner Carpathian Russia fell from one slavery into another—German.

The German government in Austria, seeing, that the Carpathian Russians, in their national and cultured respects are forming one unit with the Russian people in Russia, took fright and began to have recourse to the crafty "divide et impera" (divide and reign) and to violence, so that the Carpathian Russians might be separated from the Russian people in Russia, and that in this manner it would be easier to denationalize and destroy them.

The Carpathian Russians were even forbidden to call themselves Russians.

The Austrian Government gave them a new name—"Ruthenians".

During the national census in Austria all the Russian population was by force enrolled in the official statistics as "Ruthenians", those who protested against such official trickery, were arrested and placed in prisons.

The Russian population of the Carpathians was forbidden to learn the Russian literary language. The writings of such famous Russian poets and writers as: Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Turgeneff, Dostoewski, Nekrasoff, Tolstoi, were subjected to degradation. Russian books were very often confiscated by the Austrian commissioners and gendarmes.

Students who were anxious to learn the Russian literary language were banished from high schools.

Even Dr. Dimitri A. Markov a Russian deputy, elected by the Russian people in Galicia, was forbidden to speak in the Russian language in the Austrian Parliament, although all other nationalities in Austria were free to speak, while in this Austrian Parliament, in their own native languages.

With particular cruelty Austria persecuted those Russian people, who dedicated themselves

wholly to the people, and to whom the people turned with particular attention and love.

The Austrian and Magyar Governments had recourse to rude punishment.

Many political charges of government's treason were from time to time lodged against the famous Carpathian Russians.

The trial of priest Ivan Naumovich and his colleagues in the City of Lvoff in the year 1882, the trial of Kabaliuk and ninety four peasants in Marmarosh Siget in Hungary in the year 1913, the trial of the Geroovski brothers in Czernowitz in Bukowina in the year 1913, the trial of Sandowich, Hudima, Bendasiuk and Koldra in Lvoff in the year 1913, — are only episodes of this unequal battle for freedom, which is carried on by the Russian people of the Carpathian Russians against their enslavers.

Not only for political aspirations and national ideas, but also for religious convictions the Russian people of the Carpathians were subjected to cruel persecutions.

Peasants in Hungarian Russia, because they did not desire to remain in Union with the Pope of Rome, were sentenced to many years in prison in Marmarosh Siget. In Galicia the Austrian government closed their chapel and placed upon it a placard forbidding everyone to enter the same because of contagious disease, which was untrue.

The eminent english traveler and writer, W. J. Birkbeck, who personally visited the Russian population of Austrian Galicia in 1912, in the following words informed his native countrymen (in the London Times, for April and May, 1912) about the persecution of Russians of Galicia by the Austrian Government:

"You will be surprised to learn that the tolerant (?) Austrian Constitution which provides for complete freedom of conscience for all her subjects, (even the Mohamedans), is trodden

under foot when it concerns the Russian Uniates of Austria.

“Russian schools, however private, are not allowed; Russian books are confiscated, and boys found reading a Russian author are expelled from the gymnasiums. At the elections, whether Parliamentary or provincial, Russian voters are either prevented by troops from entering the polling booths, or the result of the election is falsified. In matters religious, their state is even worse.

“The government refused to register the people in the village lists as Russians. ‘We were always Russian, and so were our fathers and forefathers before us,’ thus spake the people.”

With reference to their economical relation the Carpathian Russian people were placed in a very critical situation. Even though Galicia, Bukowina and Hungarian Russia are considered among the richest countries of the world, they are noted for their natural products, such as kerosene, earth wax, salt,—coal, and iron is to be found in abundance and waiting for prospectors. Even though these Russian lands possess famous wells, veins, impassable forests, productive lands, navigable rivers, and many rapid current rivers for electrical energy, — all of these natural resources are denied to the primitive Russian population.

The best producing lands belong to foreign lords, who are the supporting pillars of Austrian reaction.

Valuable forests and pasture lands are in the hands of the government or in the hands of Austrian aristocrats and by no means could belong to the primitive Russian population.

As to the manufacturing industries — you cannot speak of; all private and corporate undertakings of the Russian people were met with hostile respect and considered contrary to the Austrian Government.

With the aid of the administrative and detective craftiness and trickery, and with the aid of evident injustice and violence, the Austro-Magyar Government and their bureaucrats and adherents, kept the Carpathian Russia not only in political slavery, but also in complete beggary, and in a burdened economical slavery.

The primitive Russian population of the Carpathians is living hungry the year around.

It began to evacuate its dear country in masses and settled across the ocean, so that in far America they could find bread and freedom, which was taken away from them by the Austro-German, Magyars and their adherents.

When the condition of the Russian people of the enslaved Carpathian Russia was unbearable during peace time, it must have become dreadful at the beginning of the war and in such a condition as has never been known to exist in the world's history.

Soon as Austria-Hungary declared war on Russia, more than 30,000 Russian people (Austrian subjects) in Galicia, Bukowina and Hungarian Russia were arrested, massacred by the Austrian police and soldiers, subjected to undescrivable torture and confined in war prisons and forts at some of the following places: Thalerhof, Teresienstadt, Kufstein, Spielberg, A-rad, Vienna, Linz, etc.

In Thalerhof only, in the course of a few weeks more than 1500 people died from beating, sickness and hunger.

Those who survived, (they being of a stronger physical constitution) were placed on trial and even though they all could prove themselves innocent according to the laws of man and God, were found guilty by the Austrian Courts, because of the fact that they (Carpathian Russians) did not want and could not, because of their conscience, disavow their Russian nationality. All of them were sentenced to death.

The Reverend Maksim Sandowich, as above stated, was shot, and many other famous Carpathian Russians were (and are at the present time) sentenced to be hanged on the gallows, among whom are Dr. Dimitri Markov and Vladimir Kurylovich, deputy members of the Austrian parliament; Reverend Kornili Senik, member of Galician Diet; Bohatyrec, Nicholas Winnicki, Roman Prislowski, John Maschak, Marcel Eastavetzki, and John Stanchak, Russian priests; Simeon Bulik, Alexander Hasai, Alexander Saviuk, John Cherliunchakevich and Kiril Cherliunchakevich, barristers; Dimitri Vislotzki and Ilarion Tzurkanovich, students; Nicholas Hromosiak, Ivan Diakov and Luke Staritzki, laymen; Mulkevich a locksmith, and others who were interned since the very first beginning of the war.

The remaining Carpatho-Russian population of Galicia were bantered by the Austro-Germans and Magyars in such an unmanly manner and used upon them such violence and brutality, which did not differ from the brutal treatment of the Armenians by the Turks.

Russian girls and women were rudely shamed and later torn away from their families and sent to the public houses of Budapest and other parts of Hungary, old feeble men and small children served as marks for aim of the German and Magyar soldiers as a sport; homes were burned together with their inhabitants and the villages ruined.

During the first nine months of the war the Germans and Magyars shot and hanged 20,000 people in Galicia, Bukowina and Hungarian Russia. It is impossible to compute how many Russian people they hanged during their advance in the year 1915, and in particular during the years of 1915, 1916 and 1917.

We, Carpatho-Russians, know that while under the Austro-Magyar yoke, our people expect a general destruction.

Our existence, as a nation, will be guaranteed only then, when we shall be wholly liberated from the Germans, Magyars and the Poles.

Our country, Carpatho-Russia will be free only then, when she as a whole, within her ethnographic boundaries will be liberated from the Germans and Magyars, and will be placed under the protection of Russia, and wholly reunited with her.

For this reason it is natural and evident, that we Carpatho-Russians hopefully call upon everyone, who might bring our kindred liberty from the German-Magyar yoke and a reunion with Russia.

Our irresistible aspiration for freedom from the Austro-Magyar slavery and for the reunion with the great brotherly Russia can only be appreciated by those people, for instance us, who almost 600 years have carried on its shoulders the foreign yokes.

At the beginning of the war for the first time we heard from the victorious armies in Russia the following words: "There shall not be an enslaved Russia in the future. The inheritance of Vladimir the Great, the country of Yaroslav Osmomesl, of Prince Daniel and of Prince Roman, should throw off her yoke and float the flag of the one great inseparable Russia."

President Woodrow Wilson of the United States of America in his note of June 1, 1917, to Russia, solemnly stated that "No people must be forced under sovereignty under which it does not wish to live."

We, immigrants from Carpatho-Russia, living in free America, cry out at this moment to save our kindred. This we do because those brothers of ours who remained alive in their dear countries: Galicia, Bukowina and Hungarian Russia, governed by the tyrant Austro-Hungarian government; others, who are confined in overcrowded camps, prisons and forts, while still

others who are at home but also threatened with prison, are crying for liberty but their cry is choked in their breasts, and their mouths are closed by the Austro-Magyar police, court martials and hangmen.

To speak more loudly in defense of our Carpatho-Russian brothers we organized a League for the Liberation of Carpatho-Russia." This League, representing all the Carpatho-Russian organizations and all the Carpatho-Russian periodicals in the United States of America, worried about the destiny of our dear country, convoked a Russian Congress on the 13th day of July, 1917, in the City of New York.

This Russian congress, as the highest agent for expressing the ideas, fancy and desire of all expressed the following:

"All of the Carpatho-Russian people with all the might of their hearts and souls protest against the intention of leaving them and their countries for the future in the Austro-German or Polish slavery.

All of the Carpatho-Russian people in a resolute manner protest against any form of connection with the Austro-German or future Polish governments or even to have the protection of these governments.

On the contrary the Russian Congress speaking for the whole Russian People in America, solemnly and unanimously express, that the whole Carpatho-Russian people desire an absolute liberation of Carpatho-Russia from the exotic rulers, and reunification within her ethnographic boundaries with her older sister, the great democratic Russia".

The Carpatho-Russian desire to be in an intimate union with the rest of the Russian people, to live with them a one united life and share with them the good and the bad.

The present alarming time, when all the races and people of Russia are endeavoring to sepa-

rate themselves from her completely, there is one European country that desires to be with Russia, and that country is Carpatho-Russia.

"Just as the swift river, tearing away stones that it may empty into the ocean, there is no power which could check the Russian people in their battle for a reunification with Russia."

The Carpatho-Russians do not press anyone, and they do not wish oppression for anyone, on the contrary, they wish for all the people political liberty, cultured and economical decision for the best in the future.

Every nation should receive the means to exist in its own natal country, agreeable to its own wish.

The Carpatho-Russians are claiming same thing for themselves. They have to be assisted in attaining this by every people which loves truthfulness and liberty.

This is why we, besides the call to the free Russian people of Russia, are turning also to the United States of North America and to Great Britain for assistance.

We know that these countries entered the present war against Germany and her allies solely for defense of democracy and free existence and self-destination for all nations.

We turn also to France, which inscribed on its banner: "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité".

Turning to Italy, which rised to battle for the liberation of its children, also enslaved by Austro-Hungary. Trentino and other unliberated Italian lands are anxious to throw off the Austrian yoke and enter into a junction with Italy.

Alsace-Lorraine are streaming to a junction with France.

All civilized world recognized their rights for liberation from foreign dominion and for a junction with their native lands.

Carpatho-Russia, which ethnographically, historically and geographically composes a part

of Russia, is fighting with all its might for the junction with its natural fatherland-Russia.

We Carpatho-Russian immigrants, regard it a great honor and we are proud that we are citizens of the free land of Washington.

For our new fatherland, which pittied us and which without our merits rewarded us with liberty and bread, and which opened to us an access to the wealth, glory and happiness. All these were refused to us in our native country by the Austro-Hungarian government.

We are always ready to pour our blood and give our lives for our new fatherland.

But we cannot forget about our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters, our children and relatives and all endeared to us Carpatho-Russian people and all Carpatho-Russia, which are perishing in the Austro-Hungarian yoke.

We appeal to the sense of righteousness and conscience of all civilized world, and first of all to Russia, United States, England, France and Italy.

We offer for their judgement all our injustices, torments, which the Carpatho-Russian people endure and ask for assistance a sustainance of our equitable deed and to attain the liberation of Carpatho-Russia from foreign yoke and to bring her to union with Russia.

Let there not be any longer two Russias: free Russia and Russia under the foreign yoke, but there be one free Russia.

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